



Perceptions vs the Science of the Role of Non-Nutritive Sweeteners in Calorie Reduction

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Non-nutritive sweeteners (NNS) provide sweetness to foods and beverages without adding calories. They are useful in reducing the added sugar content of the diabetic diet, while maintaining acceptability. They can also be a useful aid in reducing the dietary sugar content for individuals attempting to lose or maintain body weight. NNS have been in the food supply for over 100 years, but questions regarding their safety and usefulness arise from time to time. This talk will first consider the evidence showing that approved NNS are safe to consume. It will then discuss the public perception that NNS use may contribute to weight gain, and the source of this perception. Finally, it will review the careful, blinded studies that show that the addition of NNS to the diet does not cause body weight gain in normal weight and obese adult humans, or in children. Indeed, the substitution of NNS for caloric sweeteners, if anything, appears to produce modest reductions in body weight in longer-term studies, where such effects are more readily discernable.